

## ***Q & A: Reaching for Excellence: The Certification Program for Kansas Public Library Administrators***

by Shannon Roy, Editor

The new Certification Program has received enthusiastic support from librarians and trustees all across the state. Over twenty librarians have already applied for certification and a number of directors are reviewing the program with their administrative staff. As with any new program, there are questions and following are some answers to help clarify!

*Why should a librarian become a Certified Public Library Administrator?*

The Certification Program is designed to send a strong signal to the leaders of Kansas communities that modern public library administration is a demanding field that requires sophisticated skills and a career-long commitment to training. Public library administrators will confirm and document their continuing professional development through their participation in this program.

Certification will help individual librarians with career building, salary negotiations and partnerships with community leaders. It will help library boards build an excellent staff that serves the community well. A large number of certified public library administrators will help the Kansas library community build support for Kansas public libraries.

*Is the Certification Program all one program? Is there one program for library directors and another for support staff?*

The Certification Program for Public Library Administrators is a single program. The requirements for all participants are the same.

*What kinds of documentation are acceptable for the Certification Program's initial certificates?*

A librarian wishing to be certified should document just one of the credentials needed for the highest level of certification for which he or she is eligible. For any degree, a photocopy of the diploma or a transcript plus a confirmation of completion would be acceptable. For a high school degree, confirmation from the high school that the librarian attended and graduated would be acceptable, if it is no longer possible to send a diploma or a transcript.

For college hours, a photocopied transcript should confirm that the number of hours is sufficient for the level requested.

For KPLACE certification, a copy of the KPLACE graduation certificate will be accepted. We will send a new certificate if the LEEP record confirms three years of participation in the program.

For certification based on LEEP hours, a copy of the LEEP record must be submitted with the application.

*The certificate is valid for three years from the date it is issued. How is that period actually measured?*

The initial certificate is valid from the date on the certificate to the same date three years later. To be eligible for re-certification, a librarian must document 45 contact hours of library education or training between those two dates.

*What happens if a librarian is a few hours short of the training requirement at the end of three years? Do they have to start all over?*

To recertify, a librarian needs to take 45 contact hours of training, or 15 hours per year for three years. However, there are valid reasons, such as illness or crisis, which may make it difficult to complete the required amount of training. In that case, an extension may be requested from the State Library of Kansas Board.

*How will a librarian know if their contact hours will apply toward re-certification?*

Any training that falls within the seven major categories of the *Core Competencies for Kansas Public Library Directors* will be accepted for re-certification. Questions about the eligibility of a specific event should be referred to the Continuing Education Coordinator at the State Library.

*How will documentation be kept for the re-certification requirements?*

All contact hours of training for re-certification must be documented in some way. LEEP records will be accepted as documentation of training for re-certification requirements; however, librarians are strongly urged to keep copies of their documentation of workshops and training attended.

*Will the program accept independent study projects or work-related projects that prove competency in a specific area for re-certification credit?*

Independent study or work-related projects must be pre-approved by the Continuing Education Coordinator at the State Library. Such projects cannot replace the need for more structured courses and workshops in areas where librarians need to keep learning.

*What if I have questions about the program that are not covered here?*

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